

**Chesterfield Borough Council**  
**Equality Impact Assessment – Provisional assessment**

Service Area: Business Transformation  
Lead Officer: Karen Brown

Title of the policy, project, service, function or strategy the preliminary EIA is being produced for:

Great Place Great Service – Town Hall Renovation programme

Is the policy, project, service, function or strategy:

- Existing   
Changed   
New/Proposed

**STEP 1 – MAKE SURE YOU HAVE CLEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

What is the aim of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

The aim of the project is to redesign the layout of the office accommodation within the grade 2 listed Chesterfield town hall. This project will ensure the available space is efficiently utilised. There will be permitted changes to the building itself and to furniture. Each office will be designed to accommodate the optimum number of officers in an open plan hot-desk environment. Surplus accommodation will then be available for commercial rent.

Who is the policy, project, service, function or strategy going to benefit and how?

The plan will generally improve the working environment for all officers, members and visitors to the town hall. The project will also deliver increased value for money for citizens of the borough.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

The Town Hall refurbishment project aims to ensure that office space within the Town Hall is utilised to its best advantage, by opening up offices and updating furniture to create more work space within the building. It will also involve updating the buildings electrical and data network infrastructure to modernise the building and improving ICT by introducing Wi-Fi across the building and improved audio visual and sound reinforcement facilities in key meeting spaces.

The project will also introduce agile working principles and tools to the workforce which will improve the efficiency of the Council.

The project generates additional desk space within the Town Hall which creates opportunities for additional rental income. It will also enable the Council to rationalise its property estate.

In summary outcomes will include:-

- Improved working environment
- Improved disabled toilet and shower facilities
- Improved Audio Visual facilities
- Improved sound enhancement / reinforcement (loop)
- High quality chair provision as standard
- Height adjustable desk incorporated in to office spaces.
- Open plan working, encouraging people to talk.
- Additional Income for the council

What barriers exist for both the Council and the groups/people with protected characteristics to enable these outcomes to be achieved?

In order to facilitate the project, a significant amount of asbestos will need to be removed from the Town Hall.

Whilst the amount of asbestos is significantly more than previously anticipated, it has been established that staff members can safely remain in the town hall whilst the refurbishment work is completed.

Throughout the works staff will be required to relocate from their current office location to alternative temporary offices throughout the building as work zones are created.

Temporary work offices will meet all H&S space standards and will have suitable provision of equipment to ensure that the service can continue to meet its business needs.

Measures will be taken to minimise disruption, both from the asbestos removal and building works however these will have an impact on staff working in the town hall. Relocations and noise will be the main cause of disruption for staff. It is therefore important to ensure the needs of staff are balanced with the need to progress swiftly with the project. All employee and member reasonable adjustments will continue into these arrangements where possible, if changes are required or new adjustments needed these will be negotiated with the employee or member in line with the Council's equality and diversity and HR policies with advice from the equality and diversity section.

It has been identified that both the Voluntary Sector Organisations and Reprographics department will not be able to remain in the basement during the redevelopment. Detailed plans are being developed to facilitate their move in order to meet the needs of these services and staff.

It is not yet established whether the lifts will be fully operational, however it is anticipated that at least one lift will remain in action at any one time.

Where possible town hall staff will be provided with laptops or tablets to enable agile working from different council locations or from their home.

All works will be planned and communicated in detail, including identifying periods when particularly noisy activities will take place, (these activities will be time constrained where possible) this will allow staff the opportunity to work from an alternative locations during these noisy work periods.

## STEP 2 – COLLECTING YOUR INFORMATION

What existing data sources do you have to assess the impact of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

- Service needs analysis exercises have provided us with :-
  - Details of all staff located within the town hall, or planned to be located to the town hall once works are completed
  - Existing reasonable adjustments for all affected staff
  - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)
  - DSE Risk Assessments
  - Workforce Profile

## STEP 3 – FURTHER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Please list any additional engagement activities undertaken to complete this EIA e.g. met with the Equalities Advisory Group, local BME groups, Employee representatives etc. Could you also please summarise the main findings.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Engagement Activity</b>	<b>Main findings</b>
Monthly board meetings  2 weekly Project team meetings	Consultation with Trade Unions	Concerns raised over ensuring the safety of all staff during all the work phases
Monthly board meetings  2 weekly Project team  H&S project group commencing in Oct 2016.	Consultation with Union Health and Safety representatives	Detailed work conducted to assess the building plans and understand the implications of many features on staff and visitors who are mobility impaired.  Further assessments needed on the impact of noise, during the works but also in the new office environments

## STEP 4 – WHAT’S THE IMPACT?

Is there an impact (positive or negative) on some groups/people with protected characteristics in the community? (think about race, disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and other socially excluded communities or groups). You may also need to think about sub groups within each equalities group or protected characteristics e.g. older women, younger men, disabled women etc.

Please describe the potential impacts both positive and negative and any action we are able to take to reduce negative impacts or enhance the positive impacts.

### 1. Equality Impacts during the restack

#### Potential negative impact on employees

The following impacts have been identified during the restack:

- **Noise disruption** – this may have a negative impact on employees/members with sensory or other disabilities.
- **ACTION:** The build work programme will minimise staff/member disruption where possible. Noisy work will be completed between 6am and 11am or at weekends where possible and high and medium disruption activities have been identified. These will be communicated to staff and members in advance. Staff will have the opportunity to work flexibly during this period where possible.
- **Restricted operation of lifts** - this may have a negative impact on employees/members with limited mobility or other disabilities.
- **ACTION:** The build work programme will minimise staff/member disruption where possible. One of the lifts may be designated as a safe transit route for asbestos contractors, but the level of disruption is not currently known. Staff and members will be informed in advance and given the opportunity to work flexibly where possible. It will be necessary to review personal equalities evacuation plans for those staff and members adversely affected and alternative arrangements made.
- **Access to amenities** – It is anticipated that the current toilets will receive refurbishment. Kitchen areas and water supplies may be affected. Without action, this may have a negative impact on employees/members who are pregnant or with limited mobility or other disabilities.

- **ACTION:** The build work programme will minimise staff/member disruption where possible, ensuring adequate provision is kept at all times. As the work will be done 1 floor at a time with all staff/members vacated from that floor during the works, access to toilet and kitchen facilities will be maintained throughout. Staff and members will be informed in advance of any issues and given the opportunity to work flexibly where possible.
- **Restricted access to existing escape routes** - this may have a negative impact on employees and members with limited mobility or other disabilities.
- **ACTION:** The level of disruption to the fire exits and escape routes is not currently known. It will be necessary to review personal equality evacuation plans for those staff/members who have limited mobility. It will also be necessary to review the evacuation procedure for the town hall if the escape routes are affected. The build work programme will minimise disruption to escape routes where possible. Staff/members will be informed in advance and given the opportunity to work flexibly where possible. A comprehensive review of all H&S documentation including fire evacuation procedure will be conducted for each phase of the works.
- **ICT and Communication issues** – ICT disruptions may have a negative impact on employees in general. Insufficient communication may affect those who are away on sickness absence, maternity / paternity or those with limited mobility or other disabilities.
- **ACTION:** Staff and members including those returning to work after absence will be informed in advance of disruption and given the opportunity to work flexibly where possible. Clear communication with staff/members on site will be critical to ensure the success of the project and the safety of all users of the space. These communications need to begin prior to the project commencement, clearly communicating what to expect and how the procedures will change when work starts. Communications will run throughout the duration of the works with weekly updates planned, supported by additional communication if required, this will alert staff to the ongoing change on the building and the impact those changes have on key risk assessments and evacuation procedures. At the end of the project revised risk assessments and policies for the site will need to be communicated to all and tested to ensure they are effectively embedded.

## Potential negative impact on the public

- **Access to public spaces** – It is anticipated that public access to the town hall will be effected during several phases of the project. The council chamber and committee rooms will be disrupted during the project. Outside areas may also be affected.
- **ACTION:** The council will request permission to close the pavement to the rear of the Town Hall, which will ensure that members of the public remain safe. Enhanced security and diligence must be observed during the works. Whilst limited access impacts on all groups, mitigating action will ensure the council's functions will continue, and during periods of high disruption, the Winding Wheel will be used to host civic functions. The Winding Wheel is fully accessible with an auditorium on the ground floor as well as lift access and has induction loop / hearing assistors installed in each room.
- **Access to services** – It is anticipated that the public access to the town hall will be effected during several phases of the project. The key service that will be disrupted will be main reception.
- **ACTION:**  
A detailed plan for reception works needs to be conducted, if possible disruptive work will be conducted out of hours to allow the reception area to remain open, where this is not possible it may be feasible to create a temporary reception at the east entrance of the town hall to manage the day to day footfall of visitors to the town hall, alternatively the reception duties may be relocated to the customer services centre. Once plans are finalised they will need to be communicated to internally and externally with clear signage displayed throughout the process.

## 2. Impacts after the restack:

The following impacts have been identified after the restack:

- **Access to amenities** – Amenities including toilets, kitchens and staff welfare facilities will be improved after the renovation,
  - Improved shower facilities will be added to the basement area, including a disabled access shower
  - baby changing and improved disabled access toilets will be provided on the ground floor of the building,
  - All other toilet facilities will be refreshed and modernised
  - Each floor will be fitted with a modern kitchen with appropriate refrigeration, cleaning, storage and food heating facilities to meet the staff welfare needs
  - High quality breakout spaces will ensure employees will be able to hold meetings, take breaks and work in quiet environments when needed. This will have a **positive impact** on all protected characteristics, including but not limited to disability, pregnancy, religious belief.
- **Working Environment** – The Town Hall will be transformed into a modern working environment. This will have a **positive impact** on all protected characteristics, and will aim to meet the current needs of employees in the modern era.
- **Public and Event Spaces** - An event space will be created within the Town Hall. This will create a multifunctional space for meetings, weddings and cultural activities and will generate a rental income for the Council. The induction loops in the reception, committee rooms and council chamber will be renewed and extended to cover the event space. This will have a **positive impact** on all protected characteristics and will be a further asset to the community.
- **ICT infrastructure** – The ICT infrastructure will be enhanced allowing a flexible working and introducing WIFI throughout the building available for use by all. In addition the introduction of mobile working devices for all staff will further enable agile working.
- **Negative impacts** – There are not considered to be any negative impact on any protected group after the restack has been completed.

### Further Action

- It is recommended that equality impacts are reviewed and measured before each key phase of the restack.
- When firm proposals are known, the equality impact on individual teams in effected locations should be assessed at that stage.
- It is recommended that in addition to the messages from the corporate communication channels, line managers have responsibility for ensuring



that personal evacuation plans and display screen equipment risk assessments are kept up to date.

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Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
<p><b>Age – including older people and younger people.</b></p>	<p><b>Working Environment</b> – The town hall will be transformed into a modern working environment where everyone is included.</p> <p>ICT infrastructure will be enhanced allowing a flexible working and introducing WIFI throughout the building available for use by all.</p>	<p>It is not envisaged that there will be any disproportionate impact on this group.</p>	
<p><b>Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and cancer.</b></p>	<p><b>Improved facilities for people with disabilities:</b></p> <p>Improved shower facilities will be added to the basement area, including a disabled access shower</p> <p>Improved disabled access toilets will be provided on the ground floor of the building</p> <p>Each floor will be fitted with a modern kitchen with appropriate refrigeration, cleaning, storage and food heating facilities to meet the staff/member welfare needs</p>	<p><b>Noise disruption</b> – this may have a negative impact on staff/members with sensory or other disabilities.</p> <p><b>Restricted operation of lifts</b> - this may have a negative impact on staff/members with limited mobility or other disabilities.</p> <p><b>Access to amenities</b> – It is anticipated that the current toilets will receive refurbishment. Kitchen</p>	<p>The build work programme will minimise staff disruption where possible. Noisy work will be completed between 6am and 11am or at weekends where possible and high and medium disruption activities have been identified, so we are able to advise staff/members in advance and give them the opportunity to work flexibly where possible.</p> <p>One of the lifts may be designated as a safe transit route for asbestos contractors, but the level of disruption is not currently known. Staff/members will be informed in advance and given the opportunity to work flexibly where possible. It will be necessary to review PEEPS or DSE risk assessments for those staff who are adversely affected.</p>

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
	<p>High quality breakout spaces will ensure staff/members will be able to hold meetings, take breaks and work in quiet environments when needed.</p> <p>The introduction of mobile working devices for as many staff/members as possible will further enable agile working.</p> <p>Height adjustable desk incorporated in to office spaces.</p> <p>High quality office chairs.</p> <p>The induction loops in the reception, committee rooms and council chamber will be renewed and extended to cover the event space.</p> <p>An event space will be created within the Town Hall which create a multifunctional space for meetings, weddings and cultural activities.</p>	<p>areas and water may be affected during the refurbishment.</p> <p><b>Restricted access to existing escape routes</b> - this may have a negative impact on staff/members with limited mobility or other disabilities.</p> <p><b>Access to public spaces and public services</b> It is anticipated that the public access to the town hall will be effected during several phases of the project. Services disrupted will include main reception, committee rooms and the council chamber.</p>	<p>The build work programme will minimise staff disruption where possible, ensuring adequate provision is kept at all times. As the work will be done 1 floor at a time with all staff vacated from that floor during the works, access to toilet and kitchen facilities will be maintained throughout. Review emergency procedures including PEEPS for those staff/members who are adversely affected.</p> <p>Alternative arrangements will be made for civic functions, and where necessary, these will be relocated to the Winding Wheel.</p> <p>Ensure clear signage is displayed throughout the process to communicate plans and proposals internally and externally.</p> <p>Alternative suitable arrangements will be made for main reception areas.</p>
<b>Gender – men, women and transgender.</b>	.	<b>Access to amenities –</b> Refurbishments of toilets will affect both ladies and	Ensure clear communication with staff/members.

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
		gents toilets.	As the existing toilets will receive decorative refurbishments only, it is anticipated that any inconvenience will be kept to a minimum.
<b>Marital status including civil partnership.</b>	Register Office and new event space will be created within the Town Hall will create a multifunctional space suitable for weddings and ceremonies.	It is not envisaged that there will be any disproportionate impact on this group	
<b>Pregnant women and people on maternity/paternity. Also consider breastfeeding mothers.</b>	<p>High quality breakout spaces will ensure staff/members will be able to hold meetings, take breaks and work in quiet environments when needed.</p> <p>The introduction of mobile working devices for as many staff as possible will further enable agile working.</p> <p>Baby changing facilities will be provided.</p>	<p><b>Access to amenities</b> – It is anticipated that the current toilets will receive refurbishment. Kitchen areas and water may be affected during the refurbishment.</p> <p><b>Communication issues</b> Insufficient communication may affect those who are away on sickness absence, maternity / paternity or those with limited mobility or other disabilities.</p>	<p>The build work programme will minimise staff/member disruption where possible, ensuring adequate provision is kept at all times. As the work will be done 1 floor at a time with all staff/member vacated from that floor during the works, access to toilet and kitchen facilities will be maintained throughout. Staff/members will be informed in advance of any issues and given the opportunity to work flexibly where possible. It will be necessary to review PEEPS for those staff/members who are adversely affected.</p> <p>Staff/members and those returning to work will be informed in advance of disruption and given the opportunity to work flexibly.</p> <p>Ensure clear communications to staff/members at work and returning to</p>

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
			<p>work after leave or absence.</p> <p>Alert staff/members to the ongoing change on the building and the impact those changes have on key risk assessments and evacuation procedures.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation – Heterosexual, Lesbian, gay men and bi-sexual people.</b>	<p>It is not envisaged that there will be any disproportionate impact on this group.</p>		
<b>Ethnic Groups</b>	<p>It is not envisaged that there will be any disproportionate impact on this group.</p>		
<b>Religions and Beliefs including those with no religion and/or beliefs.</b>	<p>High quality breakout spaces will ensure employees will be able to hold meetings, take breaks and work in quiet environments when needed</p>	<p>It is not envisaged that there will be any disproportionate impact on this group.</p>	
<b>Other groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation and/or health inequalities.</b>	<p>It is not envisaged that there will be any disproportionate impact on this group.</p>		

From the information gathered above does the policy, project, service, function or strategy directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group or protected characteristic?

Yes

No

If yes what action can be taken to stop the discrimination?

N/A

**STEP 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISION MAKING**

How has the EIA helped to shape the policy, project, service, function or strategy or affected the recommendation or decision?

It has helped to ensure that the restack of the Town Hall will not have an overall disproportionate impact against any of the groups or people with protected characteristics including the public and staff.

Many positive impacts have been identified after the restack has been completed.

How are you going to monitor the policy, project, service, function or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?

It is recommended that equality impacts are reviewed and measured before each key phase of the restack.

When firm proposals are known, the equality impact on individual teams in effected locations should be assessed at that stage.

Responsibility:

Customer, Commissioning & Change Manager assisted by:

Transformation Programme Manager  
Policy Communications Manager and Policy unit  
Corporate Health and Safety Adviser  
Housing Repairs Manager

## **STEP 6 – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICATION**

Please note the draft EIA should be reviewed by the appropriate Service Manager and the Policy Service before WBR, Executive Member, Cabinet, Council reports are produced.

Reviewed by Head of Service/Service Manager

Name:

Date:

Reviewed by Policy Service

Name: Richard Gadsby and Donna Reddish

Date:

Final version of the EIA sent to the Policy Service

Decision information sent to the Policy Service